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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [IR](#) [VT](#)
SUBJECT: VATICAN: IRAN SHOULD RESPECT NUCLEAR OBLIGATIONS

REF: Vatican 028

CLASSIFIED BY: Christopher Sandrolini, DCM, EXEC, State.
REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. DCM called on Vatican deputy foreign minister Parolin to discuss Iran's nuclear activities. Parolin indicated that he had discussed the issue with representatives of the EU-3 and with the Iranian charge, and had pressed Iran to respect its IAEA obligations and improve its international image. Parolin was mildly critical of the USG policy of transformational diplomacy, suggesting that recent events in the Middle East called for a more modest approach. Embassy notes potential value in continuing discussion of Iran with the Holy See. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) DCM called on Monsignor Pietro Parolin on February 17 to discuss Iran, following up on an earlier exchange. Parolin is Undersecretary of the Second Section in the Holy See's Secretariat of State - the Vatican's equivalent to a Deputy

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Foreign Minister.

¶3. (C) Recalling that the Iranian charge had recently called on him (reftel) to explore the Holy See's views on Iran's effort to avoid a referral to the UNSC with regard to its nuclear activities, Parolin noted that he subsequently called in representatives of the EU-3 for (separate) consultations. Without commenting on his conversations with the EU-3, Parolin told DCM that while the Holy See would be unlikely to make any public comment, he had made clear to the Iranian charge that Iran should uphold its responsibilities as a member of the IAEA and comply with its requirements. Parolin said he emphasized that while Iran had a right to peaceful use of nuclear energy, it must take note of the current international situation of great distrust, and it is Tehran's duty to rebuild world confidence in Iran and do what the IAEA asks of it.

¶4. (C) Parolin went on to comment on the challenge posed to USG policy (of promoting democracy) by recent electoral events in Egypt, Iran, and the Palestinian Authority, and wondered if the USG was rethinking its approach. DCM noted our commitment to transformational diplomacy and asked in turn about the Holy See's own view of democracy; Parolin hastened to clarify that democracy is the best of all systems but must come in response to popular will, rather than being imposed from outside - otherwise it won't work. Moreover democracy must exist not only in form, but in spirit - manifesting genuine respect for values such as human dignity. (For illustration he referred to the Pope's January 27 speech to Italian Christian Workers' Associations, which talks about a "reciprocal dependence between democracy and justice" and the need for "real and not only apparent democracy".)

¶5. (C) Parolin observed that in his conversation with the Iranian charge, which took place prior to the UNSC referral vote, the charge indicated that Iran would cut off discussion should it be referred; in other words, the Iranian approach to

the Holy See was on fairly unilateral terms as opposed to a genuine reaching out. However, subsequent to the vote the charge met one of Parolin's colleagues to say that in fact Iran was "still open". Parolin commented that Iran is a very proud nation; he hinted that perhaps they need more opportunities for a face-saving solution. Asked about the overall Holy See-Iran relationship, Parolin said it was certain to continue, adding "we never break relations with anyone".

¶6. (C) Comment. Parolin's comments are typical for the Holy See in their caution, and included mild skepticism on the limits of transformational diplomacy. On the other hand he welcomed the opportunity for further discussion of Iran; we will look for ways to strengthen that and welcome Department guidance.

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